

## Just for Parents Newsletter

July 2014

### Head Start News

#### *Senate Committee Proposes \$145 million increase for Head Start*

A Senate Committee is proposing a \$145 million increase for Head Start next year. If Congress votes for this it means that more children will be served and staff could receive a small raise. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) is on the committee that supports this increase. Additional funds are also being proposed to expand the President's Pre-K initiative and child care subsidies.

#### *Early Head Start Expansion Grants Now In Action*

The Office of Head Start just released information about a new grant opportunity to expand Early Head Start. Starting as early as September more babies and toddlers will be served. These dollars will be used to expand Early Head Start through a child care partnership. If your program decides to apply they will have to work with a child care center or family home.



### Time for a Science Experiment!

Did you know that you can change the color of a flower? Here's a great experiment that can show kids how flowers absorb their food and water through their stems and roots, and how different 'food' can change how the flower on top turns out.



**Materials:** white carnations, cup or vase for each flower, food coloring, water

**Directions:** Fill containers 1/4 full of water.

Add a fair amount of food coloring (10 to 20 drops) or more if your vases are large

Trim the stem at an angle, and put a flower in each vase and let it sit for a day. Check back every few hours to

see how it's working.

**Report on Results:** At the end of your experiment, examine the whole plant carefully (stem, leaves, buds, petals, etc). What parts can you see the food color in? Which colors soaked up fastest or strongest?

**Try new experiments:** What would happen if you used a different temperature of water, or added sugar? What if you split the stem and put one side in one color and the other side in another color? Make predictions, and experiment!

### WSA to Seek 6,000 New ECEAP Spaces

Thousands of ECEAP and Head Start children are 'graduating' this month and will head to kindergarten ready to succeed. We want all kids to have the same opportunity!

The next state legislative session won't start until January, but already WSA and its members are gearing up to expand ECEAP. Currently, less than half of the children eligible for ECEAP are able to participate due to lack of resources. The state is required to serve all eligible children by 2018. We hope to make a down payment on this requirement starting in 2015 by expanding ECEAP by 6,000 new spaces.

## Past Parent Ambassador Jennifer Ross receives Brewster Denny Rising Advocate Award

In June, in front of more than 500 advocates for children, the Children's Alliance awarded Jennifer Ross Brewster C. Denny Rising Advocate Award. Jennifer started her advocacy path after her son Caleb was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. At age 3, Caleb entered Head Start at Spokane's Logan Elementary School. There, his needs were met just like all his other preschool friends. A "spectacular" teacher in the preschool classroom made sure Caleb could fully participate, and his classmates got the chance "to feel o.k. around someone who rolls around in a chair," says Jen.

Head Start provided Jen the opportunity to learn about advocacy, and as a WSA Parent Ambassador and volunteer for the Children's Alliance she became a force to be reckoned with, developing relationships with her elected officials in Olympia and DC and organizing other parents to advocate for what kids need.

Now Jen serves on Washington's Early Learning Advisory Council, providing a key parent perspective to our state leaders and policy-makers.

With Caleb now attending public school, her advocacy is widening from her child's first learning experience to his experience of K-12. "Kids come to school every day with backpacks so heavy with the challenges and mess in their lives," she says. And yet, kids and families have reason for hope—when legislators can hear their voices and make smart public investments.



### Education Funding Will Take Priority In State Legislative Session

As you know, our state Supreme Court has ruled that our public schools are underfunded. Because of this court ruling lawmakers are required to add new money to the K-12 system. Unfortunately, they are left with only three options: 1) provide a small amount of funding to K-12 (the go slow approach); 2) cut social services like food assistance for low income families, housing vouchers, or services to the disabled and the elderly to pay for K-12; and 3) raise some additional revenue with fees, new taxes, or closed tax loopholes. Most legal experts believe that the Court will oppose the "go slow approach" which is what lawmakers have been doing over the past couple of years. But raising new revenue will be difficult. While state House leaders and the Governor have favored closing outdated and wasteful tax loopholes, but Senate leaders continue to believe that the best way to pay for education is to reduce the amount of dollars we use for all non-education programs.

### The 2014 Election is Approaching Fast. Are you registered to vote?

Did you know that rich people are *twice as likely* to vote as low income Americans? How do you think this affects the decisions that our elected officials make? The future of Head Start and ECEAP depends on the votes of people who care about early learning and the families we serve.

This November there is an election to choose your member of Congress and some of your state lawmakers. You can register to vote on-line at [www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/voter.html](http://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/voter.html)

In Washington it's easy to vote, you don't even have to go to a polling place on election day. So when you get your ballot in your mailbox, VOTE!!

